

SHEFFIELD'S POEMS,
 ~ forming part of ~
 Cooke's Pocket Edition of
 the Original & Complete Works of
 SELECT BRITISH POETS,
 or Entertaining Poetical Library,
 ~ containing the most Esteemed ~
 Poetic Productions
 Superbly Embellished.



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 Vide The Rapture, Page 34.
 Cooke, Jan 28 1800.

THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN SHEFFIELD,
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

To which is prefixed
THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Cooke's Edition.

Muse! 'tis enough! at length thy labour ends,
And thou shalt live; for *Buckingham* commends.
This more than pays whole years of thankless pain
Time, health, and fortune are not lost in vain,
Sheffield approves: consenting *Phœbus* bends,
And I and Malice from this hour are friends.

Pope's Miscellanies.

EMBELLISHED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS.

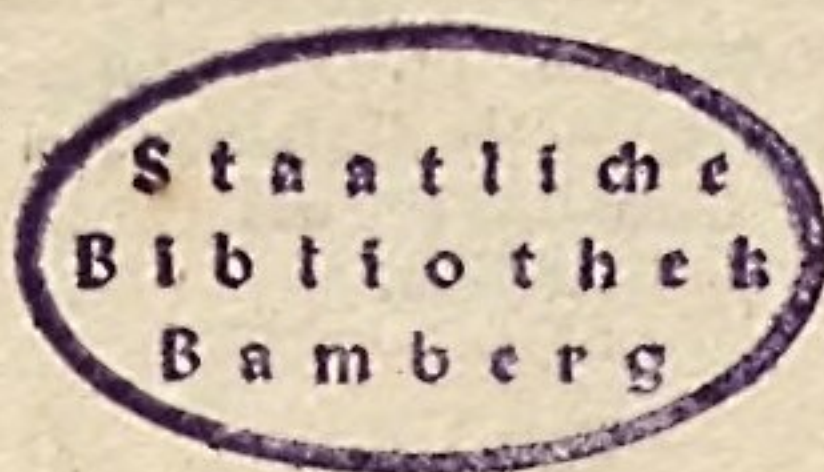
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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN SHEFFIELD,
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

CONTAINING HIS

ESSAY ON POETRY,

ODES,

SONGS,

EPISTLES,

ELEGIES,

CHORUSES,

&c. &c. &c.

Of all those arts in which the wise excel,
Nature's chief master-piece is writing well:
No writing lifts exalted man so high,
As sacred and soul-moving poesy:
No kind of work requires so nice a touch,
And, if well finish'd, nothing shines so much.

Essay on Poetry.

London:

PRINTED AND EMBELLISHED

Under the Direction of

C. COOKE.



Engraved by Granger, from a drawing by W.H. Brown, taken from a Painting of Sir Geoffrey Deller's.

S H E E F F I E L D .

Printed for C. Cooke May 11798.

LIFE OF SHEFFIELD,

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

JOHNS SHEFFIELD, descended from a long line of illustrious ancestors, was born in 1649. His father, Edmund Earl of Mulgrave, was grandson of Edmund, second Earl of Mulgrave, and died in 1658. His mother, Elizabeth, daughter of Lionel, Earl of Middlesex, marrying Lord Ossulston, soon after the death of his father, the young Lord was committed to the care of a preceptor, with whom he was so little satisfied, that he soon caused him to be dismissed; and, at an age not exceeding twelve years, resolved to become his own tutor, and dedicate a certain number of hours every day to the prosecution of his studies. Dr. Johnson observes, that "such a purpose, formed at such an age, and successfully prosecuted, delights as it is strange, and instructs as it is real." So intent was he in his application, that he acquired a degree of learning which justly entitled him to the reputation, he ever after maintained, of being a polite scholar; and his literary acquisitions are the more wonderful, as those years, in which they are commonly made, were spent by him in the tumult of a military life, or the gaiety of a court.

When war was declared against the Dutch, he went, at the age of seventeen, on board the ship in which Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle sailed with the command of the fleet; but as, by contrariety of winds, they were restrained from action, he had no opportunity of signalizing his courage. His zeal for the king's service, however, was recompensed by the command of one of the independent troops of horse, then raised to protect the coast.

At the age of eighteen he received a summons to parliament, which the Earl of Northumberland censured as at least indecent, and his objection was allowed.

When another Dutch war broke out (1672) he went again a volunteer in the ship commanded by Lord Ossory, who represented the behaviour of the young nobleman, in the famous engagement off Solebay, in so favourable a light, that he was advanced to the command of the Royal Catharine. He afterwards raised a regiment of foot, and commanded it as colonel. The land forces were sent on shore by Prince Rupert, and he lived in the camp very familiarly with Schomberg. He was then appointed colonel of the old Holland regiment, together with his own, and had the promise of a garter, which he obtained in his twenty-fifth year; when, in order to learn the art of war under the great Marshal Turenne, he went into the French service, in which he made only one campaign.

Though he entered on the possession of a large estate in an age when pleasure was more in fashion than business, he prosecuted his studies amidst the allurements of dissipation; and, whilst making his way to civil and military employments, suitable to his high birth and polite accomplishments, he was never wholly negligent of literature, but cultivated poetry, in which he must have risen to a considerable degree of eminence, if it be true, as reported, that, when he was not yet twenty years old, his recommendation advanced Dryden to the laurel, vacant by the death of Davenant.

In 1680, when Tangier was besieged by the Moors, he was sent with two thousand men to its relief. The voyage, though attended with much danger, was prosperously performed; and the consequence of this expedition was the retreat of the Moors, and the blowing up of Tangier.

During this voyage he composed the 'Vision,' which, considering the dangers he was in, affords a striking instance of innate magnanimity. At his return he recovered the king's favour, and, forgetting the ill offices done him, continued a wit and a courtier as before.

At the accession of king James II. with whom he lived in great familiarity, he was immediately admitted into the privy council, and made Lord Chamberlain. He accepted a place in the High Commission, without knowledge, as he declared, after the Revolution, of its illegality. Having few religious scruples, he attended the king to mass, and knelt with the rest of the congregation, but had no disposition to receive the Romish faith, or to force it upon others.

He acquiesced in the Revolution, though he did not promote it; and it is recorded that there was a design of associating him in the invitation of the prince of Orange, but the Earl of Shrewsbury discouraged the attempt, by declaring that Mulgrave would never concur. This King William afterwards told him, and asked what he would have done if the proposal had been made? "Sire," said he, "I would have discovered it to the king whom I then served." To this King William replied, "My Lord, I cannot blame you."

When the crown was settled upon William and Mary, he voted for the conjunctive sovereignty, upon the principle, that he thought the titles of the prince and his consort equal. This vote gratified King William; yet, either by the king's distrust, or his own discontent, he lived some years without employment. He was, notwithstanding this aversion or indifference, made Marquis of Normandy in 1694, but still opposed the court in some important questions; yet at last he was received into the cabinet council, with a pension of three thousand pounds.

At the accession of Queen Anne, to whom he is said to have made love when they were both young, he was highly favoured. Before her coronation in 1702, she made him Lord Privy Seal, and soon after Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding of Yorkshire, and one of the Governors of the Charter-House. He was then named Commissioner for treating with the Scots about the Union, and was made, next year, first, Duke of Normandy, and then of Buckinghamshire.

Soon after, becoming jealous of the Duke of Marlborough, he resigned the privy seal, and joined the discontented Tories in a motion extremely offensive to the Queen, for inviting the princess Sophia to England. The Queen, however, courted him back with an offer no less than that of the chancellorship, which he refused. He now retired from public business, and built that house in St. James Park, which is the present Queen's, upon ground granted by the crown.

When the ministry was removed in 1710, to make way for the Tory party, he was made lord steward of the household, and concurred in all the transactions of the new administration. On the death of the Queen, and the accession of King George I. he became a constant opponent of the court, and having no public employment, amused himself by writing his two tragedies, 'Julius Cæsar,' and 'Marcus Brutus,' which, though never acted, were intended for the stage, and to be performed after the manner of the ancients, with musical chorusses between the acts. They were both taken from Shakspeare's tragedy of 'Julius Cæsar,' but produced with great alterations.

In 1719, he wrote the 'Election of a Laureat,' occasioned by the appointment of Eusden to the office of poet-laureat, on the death of Rowe. Eusden's promotion gave great offence, perhaps unjustly; for as the first rate poets were then in opposition to government, or in higher situations, it was necessary to bestow the laurel on one of inferior rank. Eusden was probably equal to any of his competitors. His writings, though they do not discover great poetical genius, afford no just ground for the imputation of dulness, and ought to have exempted him from the severe censure of Sheffield and Pope.

"In rush'd Eusden, and cry'd who shall have it
But I, the true laureat, to whom the king gave it?
Apollo begg'd pardon, and granted his claim,
But vow'd that, till then, he ne'er heard of his name."

He died at Buckingham-house, on the 24th of February 1720-21, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a monument is erected to his memory.

He was thrice married. By his two first wives he had no children: by his third, who was the daughter of king James, by the Countess of Dorchester, and the widow of the Earl of Anglesea, he had, besides other children that died early, a son, born in 1716, who died at Rome, in 1735, and put an end to the line of Sheffield. His epitaph is written by Pope. It is remarkable that the Duke's three wives were all widows. The Duchefs died in 1742.

His works, consisting of 'Poems,' 'Historical Memoirs,' 'Speeches,' 'Characters,' 'Critical Observations,' and 'Essays,' were collected and printed by Alderman Barber, in two volumes quarto, 1723. They have been since reprinted, in two volumes octavo, 1729, with the omission of some offensive particulars relating to the Revolution.

As a statesman, our author is characterised by a steady attachment to Tory principles of government, which is chiefly ascribed to the personal obligations he was under to the Royal Family of Stuart. As a courtier, he is distinguished by personal dignity, gracefulness, and good-breeding. He possessed wit, spirit, gallantry, and politeness, in an eminent degree.

If credit may be given to the eulogies of Dryden, Garth, Prior, Addison, and Pope, he ranked high in the list of poetical writers. But it may be justly doubted, whether he was not indebted to his patronage of men of genius for a greater share of his reputation than was derived from the intrinsic merit of his productions. Dr. Warton unequivocally declares his reputation was owing to his rank, and cites, as applicable to Sheffield, the following lines, written by Pope, but not in allusion to our author.

"What woeful stuff this madrigal would be
In some starv'd hackney sonneteer, or me;
But, let a lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens, how the style refines!"

He cultivated an early acquaintance with Dryden, whose help he was always supposed to have had in the 'Essay on Satire,' and the 'Version from Ovid,' and who has offered him the most extravagant adulation in the dedications to his Virgil and Aurengzebe.

He was among the first to acknowledge the merit of Pope, and ushered in the publication of his poems with a commendatory copy of verses, which received the praise, and excited the emulation, of Lord Harcourt, and other admirers of our English Homer.

"Great Sheffield's muse the long procession heads,
And throws a lustre o'er the pomp she leads;

First gives the palm she fir'd him to obtain,
Crowns his gay brow, and shews him how to reign."

Pope himself seems to have valued this copy of verses very highly, and speaks of Sheffield's commendation as the consummation of his fame.

" Muse ! 'tis enough ; at length thy labour ends,
And thou shalt live, for Buckingham commends."

Besides this professed testimony of gratitude, Pope has incidentally mentioned his obligations to him in his poems, and embellished his tragedy of Brutus with two chorusses.

Of his other poetical pieces, the ' Essay on Poetry ' is the most distinguished. It seems to have been his favourite production, and is ranked by Addison (*Spectator*, No. 253) with Roscommon's ' Essay on Translated Verse,' and Pope's ' Essay on Criticism.' Though the versification is careless, the sense is always clear, and the rules are commonly just, often delivered with ease, and sometimes with energy.—It is justly ranked amongst our best didactic poems.

Of the character of our author, personal and poetical, Dr. Johnson gives the following description.

" His character is not to be proposed as worthy of imitation. His religion he may be supposed to have learned from Hobbes, and his morality was such as naturally proceeds from loose opinions. His sentiments with respect to women he picked up in the court of Charles, and his principles concerning property were such as a gaming table supplies. He was censured as covetous, and has been defended by an instance of inattention to his affairs, as if a man might not at once be corrupted by avarice and idleness. He is said, however, to have had much tenderness, and to have been very ready to apologize for his violences of passion.

" If we credit the testimony of his contemporaries, he was a poet of no vulgar rank : but favour and flattery are now at an end ; criticism is no longer softened by his bounties, nor awed by his splendour, and, being able to take a more steady view, discovers him to be a writer that sometimes glimmers, but rarely shines ; feebly laborious, and, at best, but pretty. His songs are upon common topics. He hopes, and grieves, and repents, and despairs, and rejoices, like any other maker of little stanzas : to be great he hardly tries ; to be gay is hardly in his power.

" In his ' Essay on Satire ' he was always supposed to have had the help of Dryden. His ' Essay on Poetry ' is the great work for which he was praised by Roscommon, Dryden, and Pope ; and doubtless by many more, whose eulogies

have perished. Upon this piece he appears to have set a high value, for he was all his life improving it, by successive revivals, so that there is scarcely any poem to be found, of which the last edition differs more from the first. Amongst other changes, mention is made of some compositions of Dryden, which were written after the first appearance of the Essay.

“At the time when this work first appeared, Milton’s fame was not yet fully established, and therefore Tasso and Spenser were set before him. The two last lines were these: The epic poet, says he,

“Must above Milton’s lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where great Torquato, and where greater Spenser fail.”

“The last line, in succeeding editions, was shortened, and the order of names continued; but now Milton is advanced to the highest place, and the passage thus adjusted.

Must above Tasso’s lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where Spenser, and e’en Milton fail.”

“Amendments are seldom made without some token of a rent: *lofty* does not suit Tasso so well as Milton.

“One celebrated line seems to be borrowed. The Essay calls a perfect character—

“A faultless monster, which the world ne’er knew.”

“Scaliger, in his poem, terms Virgil *sine labe monstrum*.—Sheffield can hardly be supposed to have read Scaliger’s poetry; perhaps he found the words in a quotation.

“Of this Essay, which Dryden has exalted so highly, it may be justly said, that the precepts are judicious, sometimes new, and often happily expressed; but there are, after all the emendations, many weak lines, and some strange appearances of negligence, as when he gives the laws of elegy, he insists upon connexion and coherence, without which, says he,

“’Tis epigram, ’tis point, ’tis what you will,
But not an elegy, nor writ with skill,
No Panegyric, nor a Cooper’s Hill.”

“Who would not suppose that Waller’s Panegyric, and Denham’s Cooper’s Hill, were elegies?

“His verses are often insipid, but his memoirs are lively and agreeable; he had the perspicuity and elegance of an historian, but not the fire and fancy of a poet.”

To the Memory of
JOHN SHEFFIELD DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE,
These his more lasting Remains (the Monument of his Mind, and more
perfect Image of himself) are here collected by the Direction of
CATHARINE HIS DUCHESS;
Desirous that his Ashes may be honoured, and his Fame and Merit com-
mitted to the Test of Time, Truth, and Posterity.

* AN ESSAY ON POETRY.

OF all those arts in which the wise excel,
Nature's chief master-piece is writing well :
No writing lifts exalted man so high,
As sacred and soul-moving poesy :
No kind of work requires so nice a touch,
And, if well finish'd, nothing shines so much.
But heaven forbid we should be so profane,
To grace the vulgar with that noble name.
'Tis not a flash of fancy, which sometimes
Dazzling our minds, sets off the slightest rhymes ;
Bright as a blaze, but in a moment done :
True wit is everlasting, like the sun,
Which, though sometimes behind a cloud retir'd,
Breaks out again, and is by all admir'd.
Number and rhyme, and that harmonious sound,
Which not the nicest ear with harshness wound,
Are necessary, yet but vulgar arts ;
And all in vain these superficial parts
Contribute to the structure of the whole,
Without a genius too ; for that's the soul :
A spirit which inspires the work throughout,
As that of nature moves the world about ;
A flame that glows amidst conceptions fit ;
Ev'n something of divine, and more than wit ;
Itself unseen, yet all things by it shown,
Describing all men, but describ'd by none.
Where dost thou dwell ? what caverns of the brain
Can such a vast and mighty thing contain ?
When I, at vacant hours, in vain thy absence mourn,
Oh ! where dost thou retire ? and why dost thou return,

* The "Essay on Satire," which was written by Sheffield and Dryden,
is printed among the poems of the latter.

Sometimes with powerful charms to hurry me away,
From pleasures of the night, and business of the day?
Ev'n now, too far transported, I am fain
To check thy course, and use the needful rein.
As all is dulness, when the fancy's bad;
So, without judgment, fancy is but mad:
And judgment has a boundless influence
Not only in the choice of words, or sense,
But on the world, on manners, and on men;
Fancy is but the feather of the pen;
Reason is that substantial useful part,
Which gains the head, while t'other wins the heart.

Here I shall all the various sorts of verse,
And the whole art of poetry rehearse;
But who that task would after Horace do?
The best of masters, and examples too!
Echoes at best, all we can say is vain;
Dull the design, and fruitless were the pain.
'Tis true, the ancients we may rob with ease;
But who with that mean shift himself can please,
Without an actor's pride? A player's art
Is above his who writes a borrow'd part.
Yet modern laws are made for later faults,
And new absurdities inspire new thoughts:
What need has satire then to live on theft,
When so much fresh occasion still is left?
Fertile our soil, and full of rankest weeds,
And monsters worse than ever Nilus breeds.
But hold, the fools shall have no cause to fear;
'Tis wit and sense that is the subject here:
Defects so witty men deserve a cure,
And those who are so, will ev'n this endure.

First then, of songs: which now so much abound,
Without his song no fop is to be found;
A most offensive weapon, which he draws
On all he meets, against Apollo's laws.
Though nothing seems more easy, yet no part
Of poetry requires a nicer art;
For as in rows of richest pearl there lies
Many a blemish that escapes our eyes,

The least of which defects is plainly shown
In one small ring, and brings the value down :
So songs should be to just perfection wrought ;
Yet where can one be seen without a fault ?
Exact propriety of words and thought ;
Expression easy, and the fancy high ;
Yet that not seem to creep, nor this to fly ;
No words transpos'd, but in such order all,
As wrought with care, yet seem by chance to fall.
Here, as in all things else, is most unfit,
Bare ribaldry, that poor pretence to wit ;
Such nauseous songs by a late author * made,
Call an unwilling censure on his shade.
Not that warm thoughts of the transporting joy
Can shock the chastest, or the nicest cloy ;
But words obscene, too gross to move desire,
Like heaps of fuel, only choke the fire.
On other themes he well deserves our praise ;
But palls that appetite he meant to raise.

Next, elegy, of sweet, but solemn voice,
And of a subject grave, exacts the choice ;
The praise of beauty, valour, wit contains ;
And there too oft' despairing love complains :
In vain, alas ! for who by wit is mov'd ?
That phoenix she deserves to be lov'd ;
But noisy nonsense, and such fops as vex
Mankind, take most with that fantastic sex.
This to the praise of those who better knew ;
The many raise the value of the few.
But here (as all our sex too oft have try'd)
Women have drawn my wandering thoughts aside.
Their greatest fault, who in this kind have writ,
Is not defect in words, or want of wit ;
But should this muse harmonious numbers yield,
And every couplet be with fancy fill'd ;
If yet a just coherence be not made
Between each thought ; and the whole model laid
So right, that every line may higher rise,
Like goodly mountains, till they reach the skies :

* The Earl of Rochester.

Such trifles may perhaps of late have past,
 And may be lik'd awhile, but never last;
 'Tis epigram, 'tis point, 'tis what you will,
 But not an elegy, nor writ with skill,
 No † panegyric, nor a ‡ Cooper's-hill.

A higher flight, and of a happier force,
 Are odes: the muses' most unruly horse,
 That bounds so fierce, the rider has no rest;
 Here foams at mouth, and moves like one possess'd.
 The poet here must be indeed inspir'd,
 With fury too, as well as fancy fir'd.
 Cowley might boast to have perform'd this part,
 Had he with nature join'd the rules of art;
 But sometimes diction mean, or verse ill-wrought,
 Deadens, or clouds, his noble frame of thought.
 Though all appear in heat and fury done,
 The language still must soft and easy run.
 These laws may sound a little too severe;
 But judgment yields, and fancy governs here,
 Which, though extravagant, this muse allows,
 And makes the work much easier than it shows.

Of all the ways that wisest men could find
 To mend the age, and mortify mankind,
 Satire well-writ has most successful prov'd,
 And cures, because the remedy is lov'd.
 'Tis hard to write on such a subject more,
 Without repeating things said oft' before!
 Some vulgar errors only we'll remove,
 That stain a beauty which we so much love.
 Of chosen words some take not care enough,
 And think they should be as the subject rough;
 This poem must be more exactly made,
 And sharpest thoughts in smoothest words convey'd.
 Some think, if sharp enough, they cannot fail,
 As if their only business was to rail:
 But human frailty nicely to unfold,
 Distinguishes a satyr from a scold.
 Rage you must hide, and prejudice lay down;
 A satyr's smile is sharper than his frown;

† Waller's.

‡ Denham's

So while you seem to slight some rival youth,
 Malice itself may pass sometimes for truth.
 The Laureat * here may justly claim our praise,
 Crown'd by Mack Flecknoe † with immortal bays;
 Yet once his Pegasus ‡ has borne dead weight,
 Rid by some lumpish minister of state.

Here rest, my muse, suspend my cares a while,
 A more important task attends thy toil.

As some young eagle, that designs to fly
 A long unwonted journey through the sky,
 Weighs all the dangerous enterprise before,
 O'er what wide lands and seas she is to soar,
 Doubts her own strength so far, and justly fears
 The lofty road of airy travellers,
 But yet incited by some bold design,
 That does her hopes beyond her fears incline,
 Prunes every feather, views herself with care,
 At last, resolv'd, she cleaves the yielding air;
 Away she flies, so strong, so high, so fast,
 She lessens to us, and is lost at last:

So (though too weak for such a weighty thing)
 The muse inspires a sharper note to sing.

And why should truth offend, when only told
 To guide the ignorant, and warn the bold?

On then, my muse, advent'rously engage
 To give instructions that concern the stage.

The unities of action, time, and place,
 Which, if observ'd, give plays so great a grace,
 Are, though but little practis'd, too well known
 To be taught here, where we pretend alone
 From nicer faults to purge the present age,
 Less obvious errors of the English stage.

First then, soliloquies had need be few,
 Extremely short, and spoke in passion too.
 Our lovers talking to themselves, for want
 Of others, make the pit their confidant;
 Nor is the matter mended yet, if thus
 They trust a friend, only to tell it us;

B 2

* Dryden.

† A famous satirical poem of his.

‡ A poem called, The Hind and Panther.

Th' occasion should as naturally fall,
As when Bellario * confesses all.

Figures of speech, which poets think so fine,
(Art's needless varnish to make nature shine)
All are but paint upon a beauteous face,
And in descriptions only claim a place:
But, to make rage declaim, and grief discourse,
From lovers in despair fine things to force,
Must needs succeed; for who can choose, but pity
A dying hero, miserably witty?

But oh! the dialogues, where jest and mock
Is held up like a rest at shuttle-cock,
Or else, like bells, eternally they chime,
They sigh in simile, and die in rhyme.

What things are these who would be poets thought,
By nature not inspir'd, nor learning taught?

Some wit they have, and therefore may deserve
A better course than this, by which they starve:
But to write plays! why, 'tis a bold pretence
To judgment, breeding, wit, and eloquence:
Nay, more; for they must look within, to find
Those secret turns of nature in the mind:

Without this part, in vain would be the whole,
And but a body all, without a soul.

All this united, yet but makes a part
Of dialogue, that great and powerful art,
Now almost lost, which the old Grecians knew,
From whom the Romans fainter copies drew,
Scarce comprehended since, but by a few.
Plato and Lucian are the best remains
Of all the wonders which this art contains;
Yet to ourselves we justice must allow,
Shakspeare and Fletcher are the wonders now:
Consider them, and read them o'er and o'er;
Go see them play'd; then read them as before;
For though in many things they grossly fail,
Over our passions still they so prevail,
That our own grief by theirs is rock'd asleep;
The dull are forc'd to feel, the wise to weep.

* In Philaster, a play of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Their beauties imitate, avoid their faults.
 First, on a plot employ thy careful thoughts;
 Turn it with time, a thousand several ways;
 This oft', alone, has given success to plays.
 Reject that vulgar error (which appears
 So fair) of making perfect characters;
 There's no such thing in nature, and you'll draw
 A faultless monster which the world ne'er saw.
 Some faults must be, that his misfortunes drew,
 But such as may deserve compassion too.
 Besides the main design compos'd with art,
 Each moving scene must be a plot apart;
 Contrive each little turn, mark every place,
 As painters first chalk out the future face:
 Yet be not fondly your own slave for this,
 But change hereafter what appears amiss.

Think not so much where shining thoughts to place,
 As what a man would say in such a case:
 Neither in comedy will this suffice,
 The player too must be before your eyes!
 And, though 'tis drudgery to stoop so low,
 To him you must your secret meaning show.

Expose no single fop, but lay the load
 More equally, and spread the folly broad;
 Mere coxcombs are too obvious; oft' we see
 A fool derided by as bad as he:
 Hawks fly at nobler game; in this low way
 A very owl may prove a bird of prey.
 Small poets thus will one poor fop devour;
 But to collect, like bees, from every flower,
 Ingredients to compose that precious juice,
 Which serves the world for pleasure and for use,
 In spite of faction this would favourget;
 But Falstaff * stands inimitable yet.

Another fault which often may befall,
 Is, when the wit of some great poet shall
 So overflow, that is, be none at all,
 That ev'n his fools speak sense, as if possess'd,
 And each by inspiration breaks his jest.

* The matchless character of Shakspeare.

If once the justness of each part be lost,
Well may we laugh, but at the poet's cost.
That silly thing men call sheer-wit avoid,
With which our age so nauseously is cloy'd:
Humour is all; wit should be only brought
To turn agreeably some proper thought.

But since the poets we of late have known
Shine in no dress so much as in their own,
The better by example to convince,
Cast but a view on this wrong side of sense.

First, a soliloquy is calmly made,
Where every reason is exactly weigh'd;
Which once perform'd, most opportunely comes
Some hero frightened at the noise of drums;
For her sweet sake, whom at first sight he loves,
And all in metaphor his passion proves:
But some sad accident, though yet unknown,
Parting this pair, to leave the swain alone,
He strait grows jealous, though we know not why;
Then, to oblige his rival, needs will die:
But first he makes a speech, wherein he tells
The absent nymph how much his flame excels;
And yet bequeaths her generously now
To that lov'd rival whom he does not know!
Who strait appears; but who can fate withstand?
Too late, alas! to hold his hasty hand,
That just has given himself the cruel stroke!
At which his very rival's heart is broke:
He, more to his new friend than mistress kind,
Most sadly mourns at being left behind;
Of such a death prefers the pleasing charms
To love, and living in a lady's arms.
What shameful and what monstrous things are these
And then they rail at those they cannot please;
Conclude us only partial to the dead,
And grudge the sign of old Ben Johnson's head;
When the intrinsic value of the stage
Can scarce be judg'd but by a following age:
For dances, flutes, Italian songs, and rhyme,
May keep up sinking nonsense for a time;

But that must fail, which now so much o'er rules,
And sense no longer will submit to fools.

By painful steps at last we labour up
Parnassus' hill, on whose bright airy top
The epic poets so divinely show,
And with just pride behold the rest below.
Heroic poems have just a pretence
To be the utmost stretch of human sense ;
A work of such inestimable worth,
There are but two the world has yet brought forth !
Homer and Virgil ! with what sacred awe
Do those mere sounds the world's attention draw !
Just as a changeling seems below the rest
Of men, or rather is a two-legg'd beast ;
So these gigantic souls amaz'd we find
As much above the rest of human kind !
Nature's whole strength united ! endless fame,
And universal shouts, attend their name !
Read Homer once, and you can read no more,
For all books else appear so mean, so poor,
Verse will seem prose ; but still persist to read,
And Homer will be all the books you need.
Had Bossu never writ, the world had still,
Like Indians, view'd this wondrous piece of skill ;
As something of divine the work admir'd ;
Not hope to be instructed, but inspir'd :
But he, disclosing sacred mysteries,
Has shown where all the mighty magic lies ;
Describ'd the seeds, and in what order sown,
That have to such a vast proportion grown.
Sure from some angel he the secret knew,
Who through this labyrinth has lent the clue.

But what, alas ! avails it poor mankind,
To see this promis'd land, yet stay behind ?
The way is shown, but who has strength to go ?
Who can all sciences profoundly know ?
Whose fancy flies beyond weak reason's sight,
And yet has judgment to direct it right ?
Whole just discernment, Virgil-like, is such
Never to say too little or too much ?

Let such a man begin without delay ;
But he must do beyond what I can say ;
Must above Tasso's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where Spenser, and ev'n Milton fail.

THE TEMPLE OF DEATH.

IN IMITATION OF THE FRENCH.

IN those cold climates, where the sun appears
Unwillingly, and hides his face in tears,
A dismal vale lies in a desert isle,
On which indulgent heaven did never smile.
There a thick grove of aged cypress trees,
Which none without an awful horror sees,
Into its wither'd arms, depriv'd of leaves,
Whole flocks of ill-prefaging birds receives :
Poisons are all the plants that soil will bear,
And winter is the only season there :
Millions of graves o'erspread the spacious field,
And springs of blood a thousand rivers yield ;
Whose streams, oppress'd with carcases and bones,
Instead of gentle murmurs, pour forth groans.
Within this vale a famous temple stands,
Old as the world itself, which it commands ;
Round is its figure, and four iron gates
Divide mankind, by order of the fates :
Thither in crowds come to one common grave,
The young, the old, the monarch and the slave.
Old age and pains, those evils man deplores,
Are rigid keepers of th' eternal doors ;
All clad in mournful blacks, which sadly load
The sacred walls of this obscure abode ;
And tapers, of a pitchy substance made,
With clouds of smoke increase the dismal shade.
A monster void of reason and of sight
The goddess is, who sways this realm of night :
Her power extends o'er all things that have breath ;
A cruel tyrant, and her name is Death.
The fairest object of our wondering eyes
Was newly offered up her sacrifice ;

The adjoining places where the altar stood,
Yet blushing with the fair Almeria's blood,
When griev'd Orontes, whose unhappy flame
Is known to all who e'er converse with fame,
His mind possess'd by fury and despair,
Within this sacred temple made this prayer :
Great Deity ? who in thy hands dost bear
That iron sceptre which poor mortals fear ;
Who, wanting eyes thyself, respectest none,
And neither spar'st the laurel nor the crown !
O thou, whom all mankind in vain withstand,
Each of whose blood must one day stain thy hand !
O thou, who every eye that sees the light
Closest for ever in the shades of night !
Goddess attend, and hearken to my grief,
To which thy power alone can give relief.
Alas ! I ask not to defer my fate,
But wish my hapless life a shorter date ;
And that the earth would in its bowels hide
A wretch, whom Heaven invades on every side :
That from the sight of day I could remove,
And might have nothing left me but my love.
Thou only comforter of minds oppress'd,
The port where wearied spirits are at rest,
Conductor to Elysium, take my life,
My breast I offer to thy sacred knife :
So just a grace refuse not, nor despise
A willing though a worthless sacrifice.
Others (their frail and mortal state forgot)
Before thy altars are not to be brought
Without constraint ; the noise of dying rage,
Heaps of the slain of every sex and age,
The blade all reeking in the gore it shed,
With sever'd heads and arms confus'dly spread ;
The rapid flames of a perpetual fire,
The groans of wretches ready to expire :
This tragic scene in terror makes them live,
Till that is forc'd which they should freely give :
Yielding unwillingly what Heaven will have,
Their fears eclipse the glory of their grave :

Before thy face they make indecent moan,
And feel a hundred deaths in fearing one :
Thy flame becomes unhallow'd in their breast,
And he a murderer who was a priest.
But against me thy strongest forces call,
And on my head let all the tempest fall ;
No mean retreat shall any weakness show,
But calmly I'll expect the fatal blow ;
My limbs not trembling, in my mind no fear,
Plaints in my mouth, nor in my eyes a tear.
Think not that time, our wonted sure relief,
That universal cure for every grief,
Whose aid so many lovers oft have found,
With like success can ever heal my wound :
Too weak the power of nature, or of art ;
Nothing but Death can ease a broken heart :
And that thou may'st behold my helpless state,
Learn the extremest rigour of my fate.

Amidst th' innumerable beauteous train
Paris, the queen of cities, does contain,
(The fairest town, the largest, and the best)
The fair Almeria shin'd above the rest :
From her bright eyes to feel a hopeless flame,
Was of our youth the most ambitious aim ;
Her chains were marks of honour to the brave,
She made a prince whene'er she made a slave.
Love, under whose tyrannic power I groan,
Show'd me this beauty ere 'twas fully blown :
Her timorous charms, and her unpractis'd look,
Their first assurance from my conquest took ;
By wounding me, she learn'd the fatal art,
And the first sigh she had was from my heart :
My eyes, with tears moist'ning her snowy arms,
Render'd the tribute owing to her charms :
But, as I soonest of all mortals paid
My vows, and to her beauty altars made ;
So, among all those slaves that sigh'd in vain,
She thought me only worthy of my chain :
Love's heavy burden my submissive heart
Endur'd not long, before she bore her part ;

My violent flame melted her frozen breast,
And in soft sighs her pity she express'd ;
Her gentle voice allay'd my raging pains,
And her fair hands sustain'd me in my chains ;
Ev'n tears of pity waited on my moan,
And tender looks were cast on me alone.
My hopes and dangers were less mine than hers ;
Those fill'd her soul with joys, and these with fears ;
Our hearts, united, had the same desires.
And both alike burn'd with impatient fires.

Too faithful memory ! I give thee leave
Thy wretched master kindly to deceive ;
Oh, make me not possessor of her charms,
Let me not find her languish in my arms ;
Past joys are now my fancy's mournful themes ;
Make all my happy nights appear but dreams ;
Let not such bliss before my eyes be brought,
O hide those scenes from my tormenting thought ;
And in their place disdainful beauty show ;
If thou would'st not be cruel, make her so :
And, something to abate my deep despair,
O let her seem less gentle, or less fair.
But I in vain flatter my wounded mind ;
Never was nymph so lovely or so kind :
No cold repulses my desire suppress,
I seldom sigh'd, but on Almeria's breast :
Of all the passions which mankind destroy,
I only felt excess of love and joy :
Uncumber'd pleasures charm'd my sense, and they
Were, as my love, without the least allay.
As pure, alas ! but not so sure to last,
For, like a pleasing dream, they are all past.
From heaven her beauties like fierce lightnings came,
Which break through darkness with a glorious flame ;
Awhile they shine, awhile our minds amaze,
Our wondering eyes are dazzled with the blaze ;
But thunder follows, whose resistless rage
None can withstand, and nothing can assuage ;
And all that light which those bright flashes gave,
Serves only to conduct us to our grave.

When I had just begun love's joys to taste,
(Those full rewards for fears and dangers past)
A fever seiz'd her, and to nothing brought
The richest work that ever nature wrought.
All things below, alas ! uncertain stand ;
The firmest rocks are fix'd upon the sand :
Under this law both kings and kingdoms bend,
And no beginning is without an end.

A sacrifice to Time, fate dooms us all,
And at the tyrant's feet we daily fall :
Time, whose bold hand will bring alike to dust
Mankind, and temples too in which they trust.

Her wasted spirits now begin to faint,
Yet patience ties her tongue from all complaint,
And in her heart as in a fort remains ;
But yields at last to her resistless pains.
Thus while the fever, amorous of his prey,
Through all her veins makes his delightful way,
Her fate's like Semele's ; the flames destroy
That beauty they too eagerly enjoy.
Her charming face is in its spring decay'd ;
Pale grow the roses, and the lilies fade ;
Her skin has lost that lustre which surpass'd
The sun's, and well deserv'd as long to last :
Her eyes, which us'd to pierce the hardest hearts,
Are now disarm'd of all their flames and darts ;
Those stars now heavily and slowly move ;
And sickness triumphs in the throne of love.
The fever every moment more prevails,
Its rage her body feels, and tongue bewails :
She, whose disdain so many lovers prove,
Sighs now for torment, as they sigh for love,
And with loud cries, which rend the neighbouring air,
Wounds my sad heart, and weakens my despair.
Both men and gods I charge now with my loss,
And, wild with grief, my thoughts each other cross.
My heart and tongue labour in both extremes,
This sends up humble prayers, while that blasphemes :
I ask their help, whose malice I defy,
And mingle sacrilege with piety.

But, that which must yet more perplex my mind,
To love her truly, I must seem unkind ;
So unconcern'd a face my sorrow wears,
I must refrain unruly floods of tears.
My eyes and tongue put on dissembling forms,
I show a calmness in the midst of storms ;
I seem to hope when all my hopes are gone,
And, almost dead with grief, discover none.
But who can long deceive a loving eye,
Or with dry eyes behold his mistress die ?
When passion had with all its terrors brought
Th' approaching danger nearer to my thought,
Off on a sudden fell the forc'd disguise,
And show'd a sighing heart in weeping eyes :
My apprehensions, now no more confin'd,
Expos'd my sorrows, and betray'd my mind.
The fair afflicted soon perceives my tears,
Explains my sighs, and thence concludes my fears :
With sad presages of her hopeless case,
She reads her fate in my dejected face ;
Then feels my torment, and neglects her own,
While I am sensible of hers alone :
Each does the other's burden kindly bear ;
I fear her death, and she bewails my fear ;
Though thus we suffer under Fortune's darts,
'Tis only those of love which reach our hearts.

Meanwhile the fever mocks at all our fears,
Grows by our sighs, and rages at our tears :
Those vain effects of our as vain desire,
Like wind and oil, increase the fatal fire.

Almeria then, feeling the destinies
About to shut her lips, and close her eyes ;
Weeping, in mine, fix'd her fair trembling hand,
And with these words I scarce could understand,
Her passion in a dying voice express'd
Half, and her sighs, alas ! made out the rest.

'Tis past ; this pang—Nature gives o'er the strife ;
Thou must thy mistress lose, and I my life.
I die ; but, dying thine, the fates may prove
Their conquest over me, but not my love :

Thy memory, my glory, and my pain,
In spite of death itself, shall still remain.
Dearest Orontes, my hard fate denies,
That hope is the last thing which in us dies :
From my griev'd breast all those soft thoughts are fled,
And love survives it, though my hope is dead ;
I yield my life, but keep my passion yet,
And can all thoughts, but of Orontes, quit.

My flame increases as my strength decays :
Death, which puts out the heat, the heart will raise :
That still remains, though I from hence remove ;
I lose my lover, but I keep my love.

The sighs which sent forth that last tender word,
Up tow'rd the heavens like a bright meteor soar'd ;
And the kind nymph, not yet bereft of charms,
Fell cold and breathless in her lover's arms.

Goddeſs, who now my fate haſt underſtood,
Spare but my tears, and freely take my blood :
Here let me end the ſtory of my cares ;
My diſmal grief enough the reſt declares.
Judge thou by all this miſery diſplay'd,
Whether I ought not to implore thy aid :
Thus to ſurvive, reproaches on me draws ;
Never ſad wiſhes had ſo juſt a cauſe.

Come then, my only hope ; in every place
Thou viſiteſt, men tremble at thy face,
And fear thy name : once let thy fatal hand
Fall on a ſwain that does the blow demand.
Vouchſafe thy dart ; I need not one of thoſe,
With which thou doſt unwilling kings depoſe :
A welcome death the ſlighteſt wound can bring,
And free a ſoul already on her wing.
Without thy aid, moſt miſerable I !
Muſt ever wiſh, yet not obtain to die.

THE VISION.

*Written during a Sea Voyage, when sent to command
the Forces for the Relief of Tangier.*

WITHIN the silent shades of soft repose,
Where Fancy's boundless stream for ever flows,
Where the infranchis'd soul at ease can play,
Tir'd with the toilsome business of the day;
Where princes gladly rest their weary heads,
And change uneasy thrones for downy beds;
Where seeming joys delude despairing minds;
And where ev'n jealousy some quiet finds;
There I and Sorrow for a while could part;
Sleep clos'd my eyes, and eas'd a sighing heart.
But here too soon a wretched lover found
In deepest griefs that sleep can ne'er be found:
With strange surprise my troubled fancy brings
Old antic shapes of wild unheard-of things;
Dismal and terrible they all appear,
My soul was shook with an unusual fear.
But as when visions glad the eyes of saints,
And kind relief attends devout complaints,
Some beauteous angel in bright charms will shine,
And spread a glory round, that's all divine;
Just such a bright and beauteous form appears,
The monsters vanish, and with them my fears.
The fairest shape was then before me brought,
That eyes e'er saw, or fancy ever thought;
How weak are words to shew such excellence,
Which ev'n confounds the soul, as well as sense!
And, while our eyes transporting pleasures find,
It stops not here, but strikes the very mind.
Some angel speaks her praise; no human tongue,
But with its utmost art must do her wrong.
The only woman that has power to kill,
And yet is good enough to want the will;
Who needs no soft alluring words repeat,
Nor study'd looks of languishing deceit.

Fantastic beauty, always in the wrong,
Still thinks some pride must to its power belong ;
An air affected, and an haughty mien,
Something that seems to say, I would be seen.
But of all womankind this only she,
Full of its charms, and from its frailty free,
Deserves some nobler muse her fame to raise,
By making the whole sex beside her pyramid of praise.
She, she appear'd the source of all my joys,
The dearest care that all my thoughts employs :
Gently she look'd, as when I left her last,
When first she seiz'd my heart, and held it fast :
When, if my vows, alas ! were made too late,
I saw my doom came not from her, but fate.
With pity then she eas'd my raging pain,
And her kind eyes could scarce from tears refrain.
Why, gentle swain, said she, why do you grieve
In words I should not hear, much less believe ?
I gaze on that which is a fault to mind,
And ought to fly the danger which I find :
Of false mankind, though you may be the best,
Ye all have robb'd poor woman of their rest.
I see your pain, and see it too with grief,
Because I would, yet must not, give relief.
Thus, for a husband's sake, as well as yours,
My scrup'lous soul divided pain endures.
Guilty, alas ! to both : for thus I do
Too much for him, yet not enough for you.
Give over then, give over, hapless swain,
A passion moving, but a passion vain :
Nor chance nor time shall ever change my thought ;
'Tis better much to die, than do a fault.

Oh, worse than ever ! Is it then my doom
Just to see heaven, where I must never come ?
Your soft compassion, if not something more ;
Yet I remain as wretched as before.
The wind indeed is fair, but ah ! no sight of shore.
Farewell, too scrup'lous fair one ; oh, farewell ;
What torments I endure, no tongue can tell :



A strange appearance all in tangle white,
 His form gave reverence, & his face delight,
 Goodness and greatness in his eyes were seen,
 Gentle his look and affable his mien.
Vide Sheffield's Poems, The Vision Page 29.

Drawn by B. Corbould. Ornamented by B. W. Jacobson. Engraved by J. Chapman for C. Cooke Jan 15. 1840.

Thank heaven, my fate transports me now where I,
Your martyr, may with ease and safety die.

With that I kneel'd, and seiz'd her trembling hand,
While she impos'd this cruel kind command :
Live, and love on ; you will be true, I know ;
But live then, and come back to tell me so ;
For though I blush at this last guilty breath,
I can endure that better than your death.

Tormenting kindness ! barbarous reprieve !
Condemn'd to die, and yet compell'd to live !

This tender scene my dream repeated o'er,
Just as it pass'd in real truth before.
Methought I then fell grovelling to the ground,
Till, on a sudden rais'd, I wond'ring found
A strange appearance all in taintless white :
His form gave reverence, and his face delight ;
Goodness and greatness in his eyes were seen,
Gentle his look, and affable his mien.

A kindly notice of me thus he took :

“ What mean these flowing eyes, this ghastly look,
“ These trembling joints, this loose dishevell'd hair,
“ And this cold dew, the drops of deep despair ?”

With grief and wonder first my spirits faint,
But thus at last I vented my complaint :
Behold a wretch whom cruel fate has found,
And in the depth of all misfortunes drown'd.
There shines a nymph, to whom an envy'd swain
Is ty'd in Hymen's ceremonious chain ;
But, cloy'd with charms of such a marriage-bed,
And fed with manna, yet he longs for bread ;
And will, most husband-like, not only range,
For love perhaps of nothing else but change,
But to inferior beauty prostrate lies,
And courts her love in scorn of Flavia's eyes.

All this I knew, (the form divine reply'd,)
And did but ask to have thy temper try'd,
Which prove sincere. Of both I know the mind ;
She is too scrupulous, and thou too kind :
But since thy fatal love's for ever fix'd,
Whatever time or absence come betwixt :

Since thy fond heart ev'n her disdain prefers
To others' love, I'll something soften her's :
Else in the search of virtue she may stray :
Well-meaning mortals should not lose their way.
She now indeed sins on the safer side,
For hearts too loose are never to be ty'd ;
But no extremes are either good or wise,
And in the midst alone true virtue lies.
When marriage-vows unite an equal pair,
'Tis a mere contract made by human care,
By which they both are for convenience ty'd,
The bridegroom yet more strictly than the bride :
For circumstances alter very ill,
And woman meets with most temptation still ;
She a forsaken bed must often bear,
While he can never fail to find her there,
And therefore less excus'd to range elsewhere.
Yet this she ought to suffer, and submit :
But when no longer for each other fit,
If usage base shall just resentment move,
Or, what is worse, affronts of wandering love,
No obligation after that remains,
'Tis mean, not just, to wear a rival's chains.

Yet decency requires the wonted cares
Of int'rest, children, and remote affairs ;
But in her love, that dear concern of life,
She all the while may be another's wife :
Heaven, that beholds her wrong'd and widow'd bed,
Permits a lover in her husband's stead.

I flung me at his feet, his robes would kiss,
And cry'd—Ev'n our base world is just in this ;
Amidst our censures, love we gently blame,
And love sometimes preserves a female fame.
What tie less strong can woman's will restrain ?
When honour checks, and conscience pleads in vain ;
When parents' threats, and friends' persuasions fail,
When int'rest and ambition scarce prevail,
To bound that sex when nothing else can move,
They'll live reserv'd, to please the man they love !

The spirit then reply'd to all I said,
 She may be kind, but not till thou art dead;
 Bewail thy memory, bemoan thy fate:
 Then she will love, when 'tis, alas! too late.
 Of all thy pains she will no pity have,
 Till sad despair has sent thee to the grave.

Amaz'd, I wak'd in haste,
 All trembling at my doom:
 Dreams oft' repeat adventures past,
 And tell our ills to come.

THE RAPTURE.

I YIELD, I yield, and can no longer stay
 My eager thoughts, that force themselves away.
 Sure none inspir'd (whose heat transports them still
 Above their reason, and beyond their will)
 Can firm against the strong impulse remain;
 Censure itself were not so sharp a pain.
 Let vulgar minds submit to vulgar sway;
 What ignorance shall think, or malice say,
 To me are trifles; if the knowing few,
 Who can see faults, but can see beauties too,
 Applaud that genius which themselves partake,
 And spare the poet for the muse's sake.

The muse, who raises me from humble ground,
 To view the vast and various world around;
 How fast I mount! in what a wondrous way
 I grow transported to this large survey!
 I value earth no more, and far below
 Methinks I see the busy pigmies go.
 My soul entranc'd is in a rapture brought
 Above the common tracks of vulgar thought:
 With fancy wing'd, I feel the purer air,
 And with contempt look down on human care.

Airy ambition, ever soaring high,
 Stands first expos'd to my censorious eye.
 Behold some toiling up a slippery hill,
 Where, though arriv'd, they must be toiling still:

Some, with unsteady feet, just fallen to ground ;
Others at top, whose heads are turning round.
To this high sphere it happens still that some,
The most unfit, are forwardest to come ;
Yet among these are princes forc'd to choose,
Or seek out such as would perhaps refuse.
Favour too great is safely plac'd on none,
And soon becomes a dragon or a drone ;
Either remiss and negligent of all,
Or else imperious and tyrannical.

The muse inspires me now to look again,
And see a meaner sort of sordid men
Doating on little heaps of yellow dust ;
For that despising honour, ease, and lust.
Let other bards, expressing how it shines,
Describe with envy what the miser finds ;
Only as heaps of dirt it seems to me,
Where we such despicable vermin see,
Who creep through filth a thousand crooked ways,
Insensible of infamy or praise :
Loaded with guilt, they still pursue their course,
Not ev'n restrain'd by love or friendship's force.

Not to enlarge on such an obvious thought,
Behold their folly, which transcends their fault !
Alas ! their cares and cautions only tend
To gain the means, and then to lose the end.
Like heroes in romances, still in fight
For mistresses that yield them no delight.
This of all vice does most debase the mind ;
Gold is itself th' alloy to human-kind.
Oh, happy times ! when no such thing as coin
E'er tempted friends to part, or foes to join !
Cattle or corn, among those harmless men,
Was all their wealth, the gold and silver then :
Corn was too bulky to corrupt a tribe,
And bellowing herds would have betray'd the bribe.

Ev'n traffic now is intercourse of ill,
And every wind brings a new mischief still ;
By trade we flourish in our leaves and fruit,
But avarice and excess devour the root.

Thus far the muse unwillingly has been
Fix'd on the dull, less happy sorts of sin;
But now, more pleas'd, she views the different ways
Of luxury, and all its charms surveys.
Dear luxury! thou soft, but sure deceit!
Rise of the mean, and ruin of the great!
Thou sure presage of ill-approaching fates,
The bane of empires, and the change of states!
Armies in vain resist thy mighty power;
Not the worst conduct would confound them more.
Thus Rome herself, while o'er the world she flew,
And did by virtue all that world subdue,
Was by her own victorious arms oppress'd,
And catch'd infection from the conquer'd east;
Whence all those vices came, which soon devour
The best foundations of renown and power.

But oh! what need have we abroad to roam,
Who feel too much the sad effects at home
Of wild excess? which we so plainly find
Decays the body, and impairs the mind.
But yet grave fops must not presume from hence
To slight the sacred pleasures of the sense:
Our appetites are Nature's laws, and given
Under the broad authentic seal of heaven.
Let pedants wrangle, and let bigots fight,
To put restraint on innocent delight,
But Heaven and Nature's always in the right;
They would not draw poor wretched mortals in,
Or give desires that should be doom'd for sin.
Yet, that in height of harmless joy we may
Last to old age, and never lose a day,
Amidst our pleasures we ourselves should spare,
And manage all with temperance and care.
The gods forbid, but we sometimes may steep
Our joys in wine, and lull our cares asleep:
It raises nature, ripens seeds of worth,
As moistening pictures call the colours forth;
But if the varnish we too oft apply,
Alas! like colours, we grow faint and die.

Hold, hold, impetuous muse : I would restrain
Her over-eager heat, but all in vain ;
Abandon'd to delights, she longs to rove ;
I check'd her here, and now she flies to love ;
Shows me some rural nymph, by shepherd chas'd,
Soon overtaken, and as soon embrac'd :
The grass by her, as she by him, is press'd.
For shame, my muse, let fancy guess the rest :
At such a point fancy can never stay,
But flies beyond whatever you can say.
Behold the silent shades, the amorous grove,
The dear delights, the very act of love.
This is his lowest sphere, his country scene,
Where love is humble, and his fare but mean ;
Yet springing up without the help of art,
Leaves a sincerer relish in the heart,
More healthfully, though not so finely fed,
And better thrives than where more nicely bred.
But 'tis in courts where most he makes a show,
And, high entron'd, governs the world below ;
For though in histories learn'd ignorance
Attributes all to cunning or to chance,
Love will in those disguises often smile,
And knows the cause was kindness all the while.
What story, place, or person, cannot prove
The boundless influence of mighty love ?
Where'er the sun can vigorous heat inspire,
Both sexes glow, and languish with desire.
The weary'd swain, fast in the arms of sleep,
Love can awake, and often sighing keep ;
And busy gown-men, by fond love disguis'd,
Will leisure find to make themselves despis'd.
The proudest kings submit to beauty's sway :
Beauty itself, a greater prince than they,
Lies sometimes languishing, with all its pride,
By a belov'd, though fickle lover's side.
I mean to flight the soft enchanting charm,
But, oh ! my head and heart are both too warm.
I doat on woman-kind with all their faults ;
Love turns my satire into softest thoughts ;

Of all that passion which our peace destroys,
Instead of mischiefs, I describe the joys.
But short will be his reign (I fear too short)
And present cares shall be my future sport.
Then love's bright torch put out, his arrows broke,
Loose from kind chains, and from the engaging yoke,
To all fond thoughts I'll sing such counter charms,
The fair shall listen in their lovers arms.

Now the enthusiastic fit is spent,
I feel my weakness, and too late repent.
As they who walk in dreams oft climb too high
For sense to follow with the waking eye;
And in such wild attempts are blindly bold,
Which afterwards they tremble to behold:
So I review these fallies of my pen,
And modest reason is return'd again;
My confidence I curse, my fate accuse,
Scarce hold from censuring the sacred muse.

No wretched poet of the railing pit,
No critic, curs'd with the wrong side of wit,
Is more severe from ignorance and spite,
Than I with judgment against all I write.



ODES AND ELEGIES.

ODE ON LOVE.

I.

LET others songs or satires write,
Provok'd by vanity or spite ;
My muse a nobler cause shall move,
To sound aloud the praise of love :
The gentle, yet resistless heat,
Which raises men to all things good and great :
While other passions of the mind
To low brutality debase mankind,
By love we are above ourselves refin'd.
Oh love, thou trance divine ! in which the soul,
Unclogg'd with worldly cares, may range without
 controul ;
And soaring to her heaven, from thence inspir'd can
 teach
High mysteries, above poor reason's feeble reach.

II.

To weak old age, prudence some aid may prove,
And curb those appetites that faintly move ;
But wild impetuous youth is tam'd by nothing less
 than love.
Of men too rough for peace, too rude for arts,
Love's power can penetrate the hardest hearts ;
And through the closest pores a passage find,
Like that of light, to shine o'er all the mind.
The want of love does both extremes produce ;
Maids are too nice, and men as much too loose ;
While equal good an amorous couple find,
She makes him constant, and he makes her kind.
New charms in vain a lover's faith would prove ;
Hermits or bed-rid men they'll sooner move :
The fair inveigler will but sadly find
 There's no such eunuch as a man in love.
But when by his chaste nymph embrac'd,
 (For love makes all embraces chaste)

Then the transported creature can
Do wonders, and is more than man.

Both heaven and earth would our desires confine ;
But yet in vain both heaven and earth combine,
Unless where love blesses the great design.
Hymen makes fast the hand, but love the heart ;
He the fool's god ; thou nature's, Hymen, art ;
Whose laws once broke, we are not held by force,
But the false breach itself is a divorce.

III.

For love the miser will his gold despise ;
The false grow faithful, and the foolish wise ;
Cautious the young, and complaisant the old,
The cruel gentle, and the coward bold.

Thou glorious sun within our souls,
Whose influence so much controuls ;
Ev'n dull and heavy lumps of love,
Quickened by thee, more lively move ;
And if their heads but any substance hold,
Love ripens all that dross into the purest gold.

In heaven's great work thy part is such,
That master-like thou giv'st the last great touch
To heaven's own master-piece of man ;
And finishest what nature but began :
Thy happy stroke can into softness bring
Reason, that rough and wrangling thing.

From childhood upwards we decay,
And grow but greater children every day :
So, reason, how can we be said to rise ?
So many cares attend the being wise,
'Tis rather falling down a precipice.
From sense to reason unimprov'd we move ;
We only then advance, when reason turns to love.

IV.

Thou reignest o'er our earthly gods :
Uncrown'd by thee, their other crowns are loads ;
Our beauty's smile their meanest courtier brings
Rather to pity than to envy kings ;
His fellow-slaves he takes them now to be,
Favour'd by love perhaps much less than he.

For love, the timorous, bashful maid
Of nothing but denying is afraid:

For love she overcomes her shame,
Forfakes her fortune, and forgets her fame;
Yet, if but with a constant lover blest,
Thanks heaven for that, and never minds the rest.

V.

Love is the salt of life; a higher taste
It gives to pleasure, and then makes it last.
Those slighted favours which cold nymphs dispense,
Mere common counters of the sense,
Defective both in metal and in measure,
A lover's fancy coins into a treasure.
How vast the subject! what a boundless store
Of bright ideas shining all before!
The muse's sighs forbid me to give o'er!
But the kind god incites us various ways,
And now I find him all my ardour raise,
His precepts to perform as well as praise.

ODE ON BRUTUS.

I.

'TIS said, that favourite, mankind,
Was made the lord of all below;
But yet the doubtful are concern'd to find,
'Tis only one man tells another so.

And, for this great dominion here,
Which over other beasts we claim,
Reason our best credential does appear,
By which indeed we domineer,
But how absurdly, we may see with shame.

Reason, that solemn trifle! light as air,
Driven up and down by censure or applause;

By partial love away 'tis blown,
Or the least prejudice can weigh it down:
Thus our high privilege becomes our snare.

In any nice and weighty cause,
How weak, at best, is reason! yet the grave
Impose on that small judgment which we have.

II.

In all those wits, whose names have spread so wide,
 And ev'n the force of time defy'd,
 Some failings yet may be descry'd.
 Among the rest, with wonder be it told,
 That Brutus is admir'd for Cæsar's death ;
 By which he yet survives in fame's immortal breath.
 Brutus, ev'n he, of all the rest,
 In whom we should that deed the most detest,
 Is of mankind esteem'd the best.
 As snow, descending from some lofty hill,
 Is by its rolling course augmenting still,
 So from illustrious authors down have roll'd
 Those great encomiums he receiv'd of old :
 Republic orators will show esteem,
 And gild their eloquence with praise of him :
 But truth, unveil'd, like a bright sun appears,
 To shine away this heap of seventeen hundred years

III.

In vain 'tis urg'd by an illustrious wit,
 (To whom in all besides I willingly submit)
 That Cæsar's life no pity could deserve
 From one who kill'd himself, rather than serve.
 Had Brutus chose rather himself to slay,
 Than any master to obey,
 Happy for Rome had been that noble pride ;
 The world had then remain'd in peace, and only Brutus
 dy'd.
 For he, whose soul disdains to own
 Subjection to a tyrant's frown,
 And his own life would rather end, (his friend.
 Would sure much rather kill himself than only hurt
 To his own sword in the Philippian field
 Brutus indeed at last did yield :
 But in those times self-killing was not rare,
 And his proceeded only from despair :
 He might have chosen else to live,
 In hopes another Cæsar would forgive ;
 Then, for the good of Rome, he could once more
 Conspire against a life which had spar'd his before.

IV.

Our country challenges our utmost care,
 And in our thoughts deserves the tenderest share;
 Her to a thousand friends we should prefer,
 Yet not betray them, though it be for her.

Hard is his heart, whom no desert can move,
 A mistress or a friend to love,

Above whate'er he does besides enjoy;
 But may he, for their sakes, his fire or sons destroy!
 For sacred justice, or for public good,
 Scorn'd be our wealth, our honour, and our blood;
 In such a cause, want is a happy state,
 Ev'n low disgrace would be a glorious fate:
 And death itself, when noble fame survives,
 More to be valued than a thousand lives.

But 'tis not surely of so fair renown
 To spill another's blood, as to expose our own;
 Of all that's ours we cannot give too much,
 But what belongs to friendship, oh! 'tis sacrilege to
 touch.

V.

Can we stand by unmov'd, and see
 Our mother robb'd and ravish'd? Can we be
 Excus'd, if in her cause we never stir,
 Pleas'd with the strength and beauty of the ravisher?
 Thus sings our bard with heat almost divine;
 'Tis pity that his thought was not as strong as fine.
 Would it more justly did the case express,
 Or that its beauty and its grace were less.

(Thus a nymph sometimes we see,
 Who so charming seems to be,
 That, jealous of a soft surprise,
 We scarce durst trust our eager eyes)
 Such a fallacious ambush to escape,
 It were but vain to plead a willing rape;
 A valiant son would be provok'd the more;
 A force we therefore must confess, but acted long
 before;

A marriage since did intervene,
 With all the solemn and the sacred scene;

Loud was the Hymenean song ;
 The violated dame * walk'd seemingly along,
 And in the midst of the most sacred dance,
 As if enamour'd of his sight,
 Often she cast a kind admiring glance
 On the bold struggler for delight ;
 Who afterwards appear'd so moderate and cool,
 As if for public good alone he so desir'd to rule.

VI.

But oh ! that this were all which we can urge
 Against a Roman of so great a soul !
 And that fair truth permitted us to purge
 His fact of what appears so foul !
 Friendship, that sacred and sublimest thing !
 The noblest quality, and the chiefest good,
 (In this dull age scarce understood)
 Inspires us with unusual warmth her injur'd rites to sing.
 Assist, ye angels ! whose immortal bliss,
 Though more refin'd, chiefly consists in this.
 How plainly your bright thoughts to one another shine !
 Oh ! how ye all agree in harmony divine !
 The race of mutual love with equal zeal ye run,
 A course, as far from any end, as when at first begun.
 Ye saw, and smil'd upon this matchless pair,
 Who still betwixt them did so many virtues share,
 Some which belong to peace, and some to strife,
 Those of a calm, and of an active life,
 That all the excellence of human kind
 Concurr'd to make of both but one united mind,
 Which friendship did so fast and closely bind,
 Not the least cement could appear by which their souls
 were join'd.
 That tie which holds our mortal frame,
 Which poor unknowing we a soul and body name,
 Seems not a composition more divine,
 Or more abstruse, than all that does in friendship shine.

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VII.

From mighty Cæsar and his boundless grace,
 Though Brutus once at least his life receiv'd;
 Such obligations, though so high believ'd,
 Are yet but slight in such a case,
 Where friendship so possesses all the place.
 There is no room for gratitude, since he,
 Who so obliges, is more pleas'd than his fav'd friend
 can be.

Just in the midst of all this noble heat,
 While their great hearts did both so kindly beat,
 That it amaz'd the lookers on,
 And forc'd them to suspect a father and a son*;
 (Though here ev'n Nature's self still seem to be outdone)
 From such a friendship unprovok'd to fall
 Is horrid, yet I wish that fact were all
 Which does with too much cause ungrateful Brutus call.

VIII.

In coolest blood he laid a long design
 Against his best and dearest friend;
 Did even his foes in zeal exceed
 To spirit others up to work so black a deed;
 Himself the centre where they all did join.
 Cæsar, meantime, fearless, and fond of him,
 Was as industrious all the while
 To give such ample marks of fond esteem,
 As made the gravest Roman smile
 To see with how much ease love can the wise beguile.
 He, whom thus Brutus doom'd to bleed,
 Did, setting his own race aside,
 Nothing less for him provide,
 Than in the world's great empire to succeed:
 Which we are bound in justice to allow,
 Is all-sufficient proof to show
 That Brutus did not strike for his own sake:
 And if, alas! he fail'd, 'twas only by mistake.

* Cæsar was suspected to have begotten Brutus.

ODE

ON THE DEATH OF HENRY PURCELL.

GOOD angels snatch'd him eagerly on high ;
Joyful they flew, singing and soaring thro' the sky,
Teaching his new-fledg'd soul to fly ;
While we, alas ! lamenting lie.

He went musing all along,

Composing new their heavenly song.

A while his skilful notes loud hallelujahs drown'd ;

But soon they ceas'd their own to catch his pleasing

David himself improv'd the harmony, (sound.

David, in sacred story so renown'd

No less for music, than for poetry !

Genius sublime in either art !

Crown'd with applause surpassing all desert !

A man just after God's own heart !

If human cares are lawful to the blest,

Already settled in eternal rest ;

Needs must he wish that Purcell only might

Have liv'd to set what he vouchsaf'd to write ;

For, sure, the noble thirst of fame

With the frail body never dies ;

But with the soul ascends the skies,

From whence at first it came.

'Tis sure no little proof we have

That part of us survives the grave,

And in our fame below still bears a share :

Why is the future else so much our care,

Ev'n in our latest moment of despair ?

And death despis'd for fame by all the wise and brave ?

Oh, all ye blest harmonious choir ;

Who power almighty only love, and only that admire !

Look down with pity from your peaceful bower,

On this sad isle perplex'd,

And ever, ever vex'd

With anxious care of trifles, wealth and power.

In our rough minds due reverence infuse

For sweet melodious sounds, and each harmonious muse.

Music exalts mans' nature, and inspires

High elevated thoughts, or gentle, kind desires.

ELEGY TO THE DUCHESS OF R——

THOU lovely slave to a rude husband's will,
By nature us'd so well, by him so ill !
For all that grief we see your mind endure,
Your glass presents you with a pleasing cure.
Those maids you envy for their happier state,
To have your form, would gladly have your fate ;
And of like slavery each wife complains,
Without such beauty's help to bear her chains.
Husbands like him we every where may see ;
But where can we behold a wife like thee ?

While to a tyrant you by fate are ty'd,
By love you tyrannize o'er all beside :
Those eyes though weeping, can no pity move :
Worthy our grief ! more worthy of our love !
You, while so fair (do Fortune what she please)
Can be no more in pain than we at ease ;
Unless, unsatisfied with all our vows,
Your vain ambition so unbounded grows,
That you repine a husband should escape
Th' united force of such a face and shape.
If so, alas ! for all those charming powers,
Your case is just as desperate as ours,
Expect that birds should only sing to you,
And, as you walk, that ev'ry tree should bow ;
Expect those statues, as you pass, should burn ;
And that with wonder men should statues turn ;
Such beauty is enough to give things life,
But not to make a husband love his wife :
A husband, worse than statues, or than trees ;
Colder than those, less sensible than these.
Then from so dull a care your thoughts remove,
And waste not sighs you only owe to love.
'Tis pity, sighs from such a breast should part,
Unless to ease some doubtful lover's heart ;
Who dies because he must too justly prize
What yet the dull possessor does despise.
Thus precious jewels among Indians grow,
Who nor their use, nor wondrous value know ;
But we for those bright treasures tempt the main,
And hazard life for what the fools disdain.

SONGS AND CHORUSES.

INCONSTANCY EXCUSED.

I MUST confess, I am untrue
To Gloriana's eyes ;
But he that's smil'd upon by you,
Must all the world despise.

In winter, fires of little worth
Excite our dull desire :
But when the sun breaks kindly forth,
Those fainter flames expire.

Then blame me not for slighting now
What I did once adore ;
O, do but this one change allow,
And I can change no more :

Fixt by your never-failing charms,
Till I with age decay,
Till languishing within your arms,
I sigh my soul away.

THE COMPLAINT.

OH, conceal that charming creature
From my wondering, wishing eyes !
Every motion, every feature
Does some ravish'd heart surprise ;
But oh, I sighing, sighing, see
The happy swain ; she ne'er can be
False to him, or kind to me.

Yet, if I could humbly show her,
Ah ! how wretched I remain :
'Tis not, sure, a thing below her,
Still to pity so much pain.
The gods some pleasure, pleasure take,
Happy as themselves to make
Those who suffer for their sake,

Since your hand alone was given
 To a wretch not worth your care ;
 Like some angel sent from heaven,
 Come and raise me from despair.
 Your heart I cannot, cannot miss,
 And I desire no other bliss :
 Let all the world besides be his.

CHORUSES IN JULIUS CÆSAR.

I.

WHITHER is Roman honour gone ?
 Where is your ancient virtue now ?
 That valor, which so bright has shone,
 And with the wings of conquest flown,
 Must to a haughty master bow :
 Who, with our toil, our blood, and all we have beside,
 Gorges his ill-got power, his humour, and his pride.

II.

Fearless he will his life expose ;
 So does a lion or a bear.
 His very virtues threaten those,
 Who more his bold ambition fear.
 How stupid wretches we appear,
 Who round the world for wealth and empire roam,
 Yet never, never think what slaves we are at home !

III.

Did men for this together join,
 Quitting the free wild life of Nature ?
 What other beast did e'er design
 The setting up his fellow-creature,
 And of two mischiefs choose the greater ?
 Oh ! rather than be slaves to bold imperious men,
 Give us our wildness, and our woods, our huts and
 caves again.

IV.

There, secure from lawless sway,
 Out of pride or envy's way ;
 Living up to nature's rules,
 Not depriv'd by knaves and fools ;
 Happily we all should live, and harmless as our sheep,
 And at last as calmly die as infants fall asleep.

CHORUS II.

LO! to prevent this mighty empire's doom,
From bright unknown abodes of bliss I come,
The awful genius of majestic Rome.

Great is her danger: but I will engage
Some few, the master-souls of all this age,
To do an act of just heroic rage.

'Tis hard a man so great should fall so low:
More hard to let so brave a people bow
To one themselves have rais'd, who scorns them now.

Yet oh! I grieve that Brutus should be stain'd,
Whose life, excepting this one act, remain'd
So pure, that future times will think it feign'd.

But only he can make the rest combine;
The very life and soul of their design;
The centre, where those mighty spirits join.

Unthinking men no sort of scruple make;
Others do ill, only for mischief's sake:
But even the best are guilty by mistake.

Thus some for envy, or revenge, intend
To bring the bold usurper to his end;
But for his country Brutus stabs his friend.

CHORUS III.

BY TWO AERIAL SPIRITS.

I.

TELL me, oh! tell me, whence arise
These disorders in our skies?
Rome's great genius wildly gaz'd,
And the gods seem all amaz'd.

II.

Know, in sight of this day's sun
Such a deed is to be done,
Black enough to shroud the light
Of all this world in dismal night.

I.

What is this deed ?

II.

To kill a man,
The greatest since mankind began :
Learned, eloquent and wise,
Generous, merciful, and brave !

I.

Yet not too great a sacrifice
The liberty of Rome to save.

II.

But will not goodness claim regard,
And does not worth deserve reward ?

I.

Does not their country lie at stake ?
Can they do too much for her sake ?

Both Spirits together.

Though dreadful be this doom of fate,
Just is that power which governs all ;
Better this wondrous man should fall
Than a most glorious, virtuous state.

CHORUS IV.

HOW great a curse has Providence
Thought fit to cast on humankind !
Learning, courage, eloquence,
The gentlest nature, noblest mind,
Were intermixt in one alone ;
Yet in one moment overthrown.

Could chance, or senseless atoms join
To form a soul so great as his ?
Or would those powers we hold divine
Destroy their own chief master-piece ?
Where so much difficulty lies,
The doubtful are the only wise.

And what must more perplex our thoughts,
 Great Jove the best of Romans sends
 To do the very worst of faults,
 And kill the kindest of his friends.
 All this is far above our reach,
 Whatever priests presume to preach.

CHORUSES IN MARCUS BRUTUS.

* CHORUS III.

I.

DARK is the maze poor mortals tread;
 Wisdom itself a guide will need:
 We little thought, when Cæsar bled,
 That a worse Cæsar would succeed.
 And are we under such a curse,
 We cannot change but for the worse?

II.

With fair pretence of foreign force,
 By which Rome must herself enthrall;
 These, without blushes or remorse,
 Proscribe the best, impoverish all.
 The Gauls themselves, our greatest foes,
 Could act no mischiefs worse than those.

III.

That Julius, with ambitious thoughts,
 Had virtues too, his foes could find;
 These equal him in all his faults,
 But never in his noble mind.
 That free-born spirits should obey
 Wretches who know not how to sway!

IV.

Late we repent our hasty choice,
 In vain bemoan so quick a turn.
 Hark all to Rome's united voice!
 Better a while that we had borne
 Ev'n all those ills which must displease,
 Than sought a cure far worse than the disease.

* See the first and second choruses in the Poems of Mr. Pope.

CHORUS IV.

OUR vows thus cheerfully we sing,
While martial music fires our blood ;
Let all the neighbouring echoes ring
With clamours for our country's good :
And, for reward, of the just gods we claim
A life with freedom, or a death with fame.

May Rome be freed from war's alarms,
And taxes heavy to be borne ;
May she beware of foreign arms,
And send them back with noble scorn :
And, for reward, &c.

May she no more confide in friends,
Who nothing farther understood,
Than only, for their private ends,
To waste her wealth, and spill her blood :
And, for reward, &c.

Our senators, great Jove, restrain
From private piques, thy prudence call
From the low thoughts of little gain,
And hazarding the losing all :
And, for reward, &c.

The shining arms with haste prepare,
Then to the glorious combat fly ;
Our minds unclogg'd with farther care,
Except to overcome or die :
And, for reward, &c.

They fight oppression to increase,
We for our liberties and laws :
It were a sin to doubt success
When freedom is the noble cause :
And, for reward, of the just gods we claim
A life with freedom, or a death with fame.

MISCELLANIES.

ON MR. HOBBS, AND HIS WRITINGS.

SUCH is the mode of these censorious days,
The art is lost of knowing how to praise ;
Poets are envious now, and fools alone
Admire at wit, because themselves have none.
Yet whatsoever is by vain critics thought,
Praising is harder much than finding fault ;
In homely pieces ev'n the Dutch excel,
Italians only can draw beauty well.

As strings, alike wound up, so equal prove,
That one resounding makes the other move ;
From such a cause our satires please so much,
We sympathize with each ill-natur'd touch ;
And as the sharp infection spreads about,
The reader's malice helps the writer out.
To blame, is easy ; to commend, is bold ;
Yet, if the muse inspires it, who can hold ?
To merit we are bound to give applause,
Content to suffer in so just a cause.

While in dark ignorance we lay afraid
Of fancies, ghosts, and every empty shade,
Great Hobbes appear'd, and by plain reason's light
Put such fantastic forms to shameful flight.
Fond is their fear, who think men needs must be
To vice enslav'd, if from vain terrors free ;
The wise and good morality will guide,
And superstition all the world beside.

In other authors though the thought be good,
'Tis not sometimes so easily understood ;
That jewel oft' unpolish'd has remain'd ;
Some words should be left out, and some explain'd ;
So that, in search of sense, we either stray,
Or else grow weary in so rough a way.
But here sweet eloquence does always smile,
In such a choice, yet unaffected style,

As must both knowledge and delight impart,
 The force of reason, with the flowers of art;
 Clear as a beautiful transparent skin,
 Which never hides the blood, yet holds it in:
 Like a delicious stream it ever ran,
 As smooth as woman, but as strong as man.

Bacon himself, whose universal wit
 Does admiration through the world beget,
 Scarce more his age's ornament is thought,
 Or greater credit to his country brought.

While fame is young, too weak to fly away,
 Malice pursues her, like some bird of prey;
 But once on wing, then all the quarrels cease;
 Envy herself is glad to be at peace,
 Gives over, weary'd with so high a flight,
 Above her reach, and scarce within her sight.
 Hobbes, to this happy pitch arriv'd at last,
 Might have look'd down with pride on dangers past:
 But such the frailty is of humankind,
 Men toil for fame which no man lives to find;
 Long ripening under ground this China lies:
 Fame bears no fruit till the vain planter dies.

Thus Nature, tir'd with his unusual length
 Of life, which put her to her utmost strength,
 Such stock of wit unable to supply,
 To spare herself, was glad to let him die.

THE ELECTION OF A POET LAUREAT.

IN M,DCC,XIX.

A FAMOUS assembly was summon'd of late:
 To crown a new laureat, came Phœbus in state,
 With all that Montfauçon himself could desire,
 His bow, laurel, harp, and abundance of fire.

At Bartlemew fair ne'er did bullies so jostle,
 No country election e'er made such a bustle:
 From garret, mint, tavern, they all post away,
 Some thirsting for sack, some ambitious of bay.

All came with full confidence, flush'd with vain hope,
From Cibber and Dufey, to Prior and Pope.
Phœbus smil'd on these last, but yet ne'ertheless,
Said, he hop'd they had gotten enough by the press.

With a huge mountain-load of heroical lumber,
Which from Tonson to Curll every press had groan'd
under,

Came Blackmore, and cry'd, Look, all these are my
lays,

But at present I beg you'd but read my Essays.

Lampooners and critics rush'd in like a tide;
Stern Dennis, and Gildon, came first side-by-side.
Apollo confess'd that their lashes had stings,
But beadles and hangmen were never chose kings.

Steele long had so cunningly manag'd the town,
He could not be blam'd for expecting the crown;
Apollo demurr'd as to granting his wish,
But wish'd him good luck in his project of fish.

Lame Congreve, unable such things to endure,
Of Apollo begg'd either a crown or a cure.
To refuse such a writer Apollo was loth,
And almost inclin'd to have granted him both.

When Buckingham came, he scarce car'd to be seen,
Till Phœbus desir'd his old friend to walk in;
But a laureat peer had never been known,
The commoners claimed that place as their own.

Yet if the kind god had been ne'er so inclin'd
To break an old rule, yet he well knew his mind,
Who of such preferment would only make sport,
And laugh'd at all suitors for places at court.

Notwithstanding this law, yet Lansdowne was nam'd,
But Apollo with kindness his indolence blam'd,
And said he would choose him, but that he should fear
An employment of trouble he never could bear.

A prelate * for wit and for eloquence fam'd,
Apollo soon mis'd, and he needs not be nam'd ;
Since amidst a whole bench, of which some are so bright,
No one of them shines so learn'd and polite.

To Shippen, Apollo was cold with respect,
Since he for the state could the muses neglect :
But said, in a greater assembly he shin'd,
And places were things he had ever declin'd.

Trap, Young, and Vanbrugh, expected reward,
For somethings writ well : but Apollo declar'd,
That one was too flat, the other too rough,
And the third sure already had places enough.

Pert Budgell came next, and demanding the bays,
Said, those works must be good which had Addison's
praise ;

But Apollo reply'd, Child Eustace, 'tis known,
Most authors will praise whatsoever's their own.

When Philips came forth, as starch as a Quaker,
Whose simple profession's a pastoral maker ;
Apollo advis'd him from playhouse to keep,
And pipe to nought else but his dog and his sheep.

Hughes, Fenton, and Gay, came last in the train,
Too modest to ask for the crown they would gain :
Phœbus thought them too bashful, and said they would
need

More boldness, if ever they hop'd to succeed.

Apollo, now driven to a cursed quandary,
Was wishing for Swift, or the fam'd Lady Mary :
Nay, had honest Tom Southerne but been within call—
But at last he grew wanton, and laugh'd at them all :

And so spying one who came only to gaze,
A hater of verse, and despiser of plays ;
To him in great form, without any delay,
(Though a zealous fanatic) presented the bay.

* Dr. Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester.

All the wits stood astonish'd at hearing the god
So gravely pronounce an election so odd ;
And though Prior and Pope only laugh'd in his face,
Most others were ready to sink in the place.

Yet some thought the vacancy open was kept,
Concluding the bigot would never accept :
But the hypocrite told them, he well understood,
Though the function was wicked, the stipend was good.

At last in rush'd Eusden, and cry'd, " Who shall have it,
" But I, the true laureat, to whom the king gave it ?"
Apollo begg'd pardon, and granted his claim ;
But vow'd, though, till then, he ne'er heard of his
name.

ON THE DUKE OF YORK,

BANISHED TO BRUSSELS.

I FEEL a strange impulse, a strong desire,
(For what vain thoughts will not a muse inspire ')
To sing on lofty subjects, and to raise
My own low fame, by writing James's praise.

Oft' have we heard the wonders of his youth,
Observ'd those seeds of fortitude and truth,
Which since have spread so wide, so wondrous high,
The good distress'd beneath that shelter lie.

In arms more active than ev'n war requir'd,
And in the midst of mighty chiefs admir'd,
Of all Heaven's gifts, no temper is so rare,
As so much courage mix'd with so much care.
When martial fire makes all the spirits boil,
And forces youth to military toil,
No wonder it should fiercely then engage :
Women themselves will venture in a rage :
But in the midst of all that furious heat,
While so intent on actions brave and great,
For other lives to feel such tender fears,
And, careless of his own, to care for theirs,

Is that composure which a hero makes,
 And which illustrious York alone partakes
 With that great man*, whose fame has flown so far,
 Who taught him first the noble art of war.

Oh, wondrous pair! whom equal virtues crown,
 Oh worthy of each other's vast renown;
 None but Turenne with York could glory share,
 And none but York deserve so great a master's care.

Scarce was he come to bless his native isle,
 And reap the soft reward of glorious toil,
 But, like Alcides, still new dangers call
 His courage forth, and still he vanquish'd all.

At sea, that bloody scene of boundless rage,
 Where floating castles in fierce flames engage,
 (Where Mars himself does frowningly command,
 And by lieutenants only fights at land;)
 For his own fame howe'er he fought before,
 For England's honour yet he ventur'd more.

In those black times, when, faction raging high,
 Valour and Innocence were forc'd to fly,
 With York they fled; but not deprest his mind;
 Still, like a diamond in the dust, it shin'd.
 When from afar his drooping friends beheld
 How in distress he ev'n himself excell'd;
 How to his envious fate, his country's frown,
 His brother's will, he sacrific'd his own;
 They rais'd their hearts, and never doubted more,
 But that just Heaven would all our joys restore.

So when black clouds surround heaven's glorious
 face,
 Tempestuous darkness covering all the place,
 If we discern but the least glimmering ray
 Of that bright orb of fire which rules the day,
 The cheerful sight our fainting courage warms;
 Fix'd upon that, we fear no future harms.

* The Marechal de Turenne.

ON APPREHENSION OF LOSING WHAT
HE HAD NEWLY GAINED.

IN IMITATION OF OVID.

SURE I of all men am the first
That ever was by kindness curst,
Who must my only bliss bemoan,
And am by happiness undone.

Had I at distance only seen
That lovely face, I might have been
With the delightful object pleas'd,
But not with all this passion seiz'd.

When afterwards so near I came
As to be scorch'd in beauty's flame;
To so much softness, so much sense,
Reason itself made no defence.

What pleasing thoughts possess'd my mind,
When little favours show'd you kind!
And though, when coldness oft' prevail'd,
My heart would sink, and spirits fail'd,
Yet willingly the yoke I bore,
And all your chains as bracelets wore:
At your lov'd feet all day would lie,
Desiring, without knowing why:
For, not yet blest within your arms,
Who could have thought of half your charms!
Charms of such a wondrous kind,
Words we cannot, must not find;
A body worthy of your mind.
Fancy could ne'er so high reflect,
Nor love itself such joys expect.

After such embraces past,
Whose memory will ever last,
Love is still reflecting back;
All my soul is on a rack:
To be in hell's sufficient curse,
But to fall from heaven is worse.
I liv'd in grief ere this I knew,
But then I dwelt in darkness too.

Of gains, alas ! I could not boast ;
But little thought how much I lost.

Now heart-devouring eagerness,
And sharp impatience to possess ;
Now restless cares, consuming fires,
Anxious thoughts, and fierce desires,
Tear my heart to that degree,
For ever fix'd on only thee :
Then all my comfort is, I shall
Live in thy arms, or not at all.

THE PICTURE,

IN IMITATION OF ANACREON.

THOU flatterer of all the fair,
Come with all your skill and care ;
Draw me such a shape and face
As your flattery would disgrace.
Wish not that she would appear,
'Tis well for you she is not here ;
Scarce can you with safety see
All her charms describ'd by me :
I, alas ! the danger know,
I, alas ! have felt the blow ;
Mourn, as lost, my former days,
That never sung of Celia's praise ;
And those few that are behind
I shall blest or wretched find,
Only just as she is kind.

With her tempting eyes begin,
Eyes that would draw angels in
To a second sweeter sin.
Oh, those wanton rolling eyes !
At each glance a lover dies :
Make them bright, yet make them willing,
Let them look both kind and killing.

Next, draw her forehead ; then her nose,
And lips just opening, that disclose
Teeth so bright, and breath so sweet,
So much beauty, so much wit,
To our very soul they strike,
All our senses pleas'd alike.

But so pure a white and red,
 Never, never, can be said :
 What are words in such a case ?
 What is paint to such a face ?
 How should either art avail us ?
 Fancy here itself must fail us.

In her looks, and in her mien,
 Such a graceful air is seen,
 That if you, with all your art,
 Can but reach the smallest part,
 Next to her, the matchless she,
 We shall wonder most at thee.

Then her neck, and breasts, and hair,
 And her——but my charming fair
 Does in a thousand things excel,
 Which I must not, dare not tell.

How go on then ? Oh ! I see
 A lovely Venus drawn by thee ;
 Oh how fair she does appear !
 Touch it only here and there.
 Make her yet seem more divine,
 Your Venus then may look like mine,
 Whose bright form, if once you saw,
 You by her would Venus draw.

ON THE LOSS OF AN ONLY SON,
 ROBERT MARQUIS OF NORMANDY.

OUR morning's gay and shining ;
 The day our joys declare ;
 At evening no repining ;
 And night's all void of care.

A fond transported mother
 Was often heard to cry,
 Oh, where is such another,
 So bless'd by Heaven as I ?

A child at first was wanting ;
 Now such a son was sent,
 As parents most lamenting
 In him would find content.

A child of whom kind Heaven
 Not only hope bestows,
 But has already given
 Him all our hopes propose.

The happy fire's possessing
 His share in such a boy,
 Adds still a greater blessing
 To all my other joy.

But ah! this shiny weather
 Became too hot at last;
 Black clouds began to gather,
 And all the sky o'ercast:

So fierce a fever rages,
 We all lie drown'd in tears;
 And dismal sad presages
 Come thundering in our ears.

The doubts that made us languish
 Did worse, far worse than kill.
 Yet, oh, with all their anguish,
 Would we had doubted still.

But why so much digression,
 This fatal loss to show?
 Alas, there's no expression
 Can tell a parent's woe!

ON MR. POPE, AND HIS POEMS.

WITH age decay'd, with courts and business tir'd,
 Caring for nothing but what ease requir'd,
 Too serious now a wanton muse to court,
 And from the critics safe arriv'd in port;
 I little thought of launching forth again,
 Amidst adventurous rovers of the pen;
 And, after some small undeserv'd success,
 Thus hazarding at last to make it less.

Encomiums suit not this censorious time,
 Itself a subject for satiric rhyme;

Ignorance honor'd, wit and worth defam'd,
Folly triumphant, and ev'n Homer blam'd.
But to this genius, join'd with so much art,
Such various learning mix'd in every part,
Poets are bound a loud applause to pay;
Apollo bids it, and they must obey.

And yet so wondrous, so sublime a thing,
As the great Iliad, scarce could make me sing;
Except I justly could at once commend
A good companion, and as firm a friend.
One moral, or a mere well-natur'd deed,
Can all desert in sciences exceed.

'Tis great delight to laugh at some men's ways;
But a much greater to give merit praise.

ON THE TIMES.

SINCE in vain our parsons teach,
Hear for once a poet preach:
Vice has lost its very name,
Skill and cozenage thought the same;
Only playing well the game.
Foul contrivances we see
Call'd but ingenuity:
Ample fortunes often made
Out of frauds in every trade,
Which an awkward child afford
Enough to wed the greatest lord.
The miser starves to raise a son;
But, if once the fool is gone,
Years of thrift scarce serve a day,
Rake-hell squanders all away.
Husbands seeking for a place,
Or toiling for their pay;
While their wives undo their race
By petticoats and play:
Breeding boys to drink and dice,
Carrying girls to comedies,
Where mama's intrigues are shown,
Which ere long will be their own.

Having first at sermon slept,
 Tedious day is weekly kept
 By worse hypocrites than men,
 Till Monday comes to cheat again.
 Ev'n among the noblest born,
 Moral virtue is a scorn ;
 Gratitude, but rare at best,
 And fidelity a jest.
 All our wit but party-mocks,
 All our wisdom raising stocks :
 Counted folly to defend
 Sinking side, or falling friend.
 Long an officer may serve ;
 Prais'd and wounded, he may starve :
 No receipt to make him rise,
 Like inventing loyal lies.
 We, whose ancestors have shin'd
 In arts of peace, and fields of fame,
 To ill and idleness inclin'd,
 Now are grown a public shame.
 Fatal that intestine jar,
 Which produc'd our civil war !
 Ever since, how sad a race !
 Senseless, violent, and base !

ON THE DEITY.

WRETCHED mankind ! void of both strength and
 Dextrous at nothing but at doing ill ! (skill !
 In merit humble, in pretensions high ;
 Among them none, alas ! more weak than I,
 And none more blind : tho' still I worthless thought
 The best I ever spoke, or ever wrote.

But zealous heat exalts the humblest mind ;
 Within my soul such strong impulse I find
 The heavenly tribute of due praise to pay :
 Perhaps 'tis sacred, and I must obey.

Yet such the subjects various, and so high,
 Stupendous wonders of the Deity !

Miraculous effects of boundless power!
 And that as boundless goodness shining more!
 All these so numberless my thoughts attend,
 Oh where shall I begin, or ever end?

But on that theme which ev'n the wise abuse,
 So sacred, so sublime, and so abstruse,
 Abruptly to break off, wants no excuse.

While others vainly strive to know thee more,
 Let me in silent reverence adore;
 Wishing that human power were higher rais'd,
 Only that thine might be more nobly prais'd!
 Thrice happy angels in their high degree,
 Created worthy of extolling thee!

WRITTEN OVER A GATE.

HERE lives a man, who, by relation
 Depends upon predestination;
 For which the learned and the wise
 His understanding much despise.
 But I pronounce, with loyal tongue,
 Him in the right, them in the wrong;
 For how could such a wretch succeed,
 But that, alas! it was decreed?

TO A LADY

RETIRING INTO A MONASTERY.

WHAT breast but your's can hold the double fire
 Of fierce devotion, and of fond desire?
 Love would shine forth, were not your zeal so bright,
 Whose glaring flames eclipse his gentler light?
 Less seems the faith that mountains can remove,
 Than this which triumphs over youth and love.
 But shall some threatening priest divide us two?
 What worse than that could all his curses do?
 Thus with a fright some have resign'd their breath,
 And poorly dy'd, only for fear of death.

Heaven sees our passions with indulgence still,
 And they who once lov'd well, cannot do ill.

While to us nothing but ourselves is dear,
Should the world frown, yet what have we to fear?
Fame, wealth, and power, those high-priz'd gifts of
fate,

The low concerns of a less happy state,
Are far beneath us: Fortune's self may take
Her aim at us, yet no impression make.
Let worldlings ask her help, or fear her harms;
We can lie safe, lock'd in each other's arms;
Like the blest saints, eternal raptures know,
And slight those storms that vainly rest below.

Yet this, all this you are resolv'd to quit;
I see my ruin, and I must submit:
But think, O think, before you prove unkind,
How lost a wretch you leave forlorn behind.

Malignant envy, mix'd with hate and fear,
Revenge for wrongs too burdensome to bear;
Ev'n zeal itself, from whence all mischiefs spring,
Have never done so barbarous a thing.

With such a fate the heavens decreed to vex
Armida once, though of the fairer sex.
Rinaldo she had charm'd with so much art;
Hers was his power, his person and his heart:
Honour's high thoughts no more his mind could move;
She sooth'd his rage, and turn'd it all to love:
When straight a gust of fierce devotion blows,
And in a moment all her joys o'erthrows:
The poor Armida tears her golden hair,
Matchless till now, for love or for despair.
Who is not mov'd while the sad nymph complains?
Yet you now act what Tasso only feigns:
And after all our vows, our sighs, our tears,
My banish'd sorrows, and your conquer'd fears,
So many doubts, so many dangers past,
Visions of zeal must vanquish me at last.

Thus, in great Homer's war, throughout the field
Some hero still made all things mortal yield;
But when a god once took the vanquish'd side,
The weak prevail'd, and the victorious dy'd.

A LETTER FROM SEA.

FAIREST, if time and absence can incline
Your heart to wandering thoughts no more than
mine ;

Then shall my hand, as changeless as my mind,
From your glad eyes a kindly welcome find ;
Then, while this note my constancy assures,
You'll be almost as pleas'd as I with yours.
And trust me, when I feel that kind relief,
Absence itself awhile suspends its grief :
So may it do with you, but strait return ;
For it were cruel not sometimes to mourn
His fate, who this long time he keeps away,
Mourns all the night, and sighs out all the day ;
Grieving yet more, when he reflects that you
Must not be happy, or must not be true.
But since to me it seems a blacker fate
To be inconstant than unfortunate ;
Remember all those vows between us past,
When I from all I value parted last ;
May you alike with kind impatience burn,
And something miss till I with joy return ;
And soon may pitying heaven that blessing give,
As in the hopes of that alone I live.

TO ONE WHO ACCUSED HIM OF BEING
TOO SENSUAL IN HIS LOVE.

THINK not, my fair, 'tis sin or shame,
To bless the man who so adores ;
Nor give so hard, unjust a name
To all those favours he implores.
Beauty is heaven's most bounteous gift esteem'd,
Because by love men are from vice redeem'd.

Yet wish not vainly for a love
From all the force of nature clear :
That is reserv'd for those above,
And 'tis a fault to claim it here.
For sensual joys ye scorn that we should love ye,
But love without them is as much above ye.

THE WARNING.

LOVERS, who waste your thoughts and youth
In passion's fond extremes,
Who dream of womens' love and truth,
And doat upon your dreams :

I should not here your fancy take
From such a pleasing state,
Were you not sure at last to wake,
And find your fault too late.

Then learn betimes, the love which crowns
Our cares is all but wiles,
Compos'd of false fantastic frowns,
And soft dissembling smiles.

With anger, which sometimes they feign,
They cruel tyrants prove ;
And then turn flatterers again,
With as affected love.

As if some injury was meant
To those they kindly us'd,
Those lovers are the most content
That have been still refus'd.

Since each has in his bosom nurs'd
A false and fawning foe,
'Tis just and wise, by striking first,
To 'scape the fatal blow.

THE VENTURE.

OH, how I languish ! what a strange
Unruly fierce desire !
My spirits feel some wondrous change,
My heart is all on fire.

Now, all ye wiser thoughts away,
In vain your tale ye tell
Of patient hopes, and dull delay,
Love's foppish part ; farewell.

Suppose one week's delay will give
All that my wishes move :
Oh, who so long a time can live,
Stretch'd on the rack of love ?

Her soul perhaps is too sublime
To like such slavish fear ;
Discretion, prudence, all is crime,
If once condemn'd by her.

When honour does the soldier call
To some unequal fight,
Resolv'd to conquer, or to fall,
Before his general's sight ;

Advanc'd the happy hero lives :
Or if ill fate denies,
The noble rashness heaven forgives,
And gloriously he dies.

DESPAIR.

ALL hopeless of relief,
Incapable of rest,
In vain I strive to vent a grief
That's not to be exprest.

This rage within my veins
No reason can remove ;
Of all the minds' most cruel pains,
The sharpest sure is love.

Yet while I languish so,
And on thee vainly call ;
Take heed, fair cause of all my woe,
What fate may thee befall.

Ungrateful, cruel faults
Suit not thy gentle sex ;
Hereafter, how will guilty thoughts
Thy tender conscience vex !

When welcome death shall bring
Relief to wretched me,
My soul enlarg'd, and once on wing,
In haste will fly to thee.

When in thy lonely bed
My ghost its moan shall make,
With saddest signs that I am dead,
And dead for thy dear sake ;

Struck with that conscious blow,
Thy very soul will start :
Pale as my shadow thou wilt grow,
And cold as is thy heart.

Too late remorse will then
Untimely pity show
To him, who, of all mortal men,
Did most thy value know.

Yet, with this broken heart,
I wish thou never be
Tormented with the thousandth part
Of what I feel for thee.

TO A COQUET BEAUTY.

FROM wars and plagues come no such harms
As from a nymph so full of charms,
So much sweetness in her face,
In her motions such a grace.
In her kind inviting eyes
Such a soft enchantment lies,
That we please ourselves too soon,
And are with empty hopes undone.

After all her softness, we
Are but slaves, while she is free ;
Free, alas ! from all desire,
Except to set the world on fire.

Thou, fair dissembler, dost but thus
Deceive thyself, as well as us.
Like a restless monarch, thou
Wouldst rather force mankind to bow,

And venture round the world to roam,
Than govern peaceably at home.
But trust me, Celia, trust me when
Apollo's self inspires my pen,
One hour of love's delight outweighs
Whole years of universal praise ;
And one adorer, kindly us'd,
Gives truer joys than crowds refus'd.
For what does youth and beauty serve ?
Why more than all your sex deserve ?
Why such soft alluring arts
To charm our eyes, and melt our hearts ?
By our loss you nothing gain.
Unless you love, you please in vain.

THE RELAPSE.

LIKE children in a starry night,
When I beheld those eyes before,
I gaz'd with wonder and delight,
Insensible of all their power.

I play'd about the flame so long,
At last I felt the scorching fire ;
My hopes were weak, my passion strong,
And I lay dying with desire.

By all the helps of human art,
I just recover'd so much sense,
As to avoid, with heavy heart,
The fair, but fatal, influence.

But, since you shine away despair,
And now my sighs no longer shun,
No Persian, in his zealous prayer,
So much adores the rising sun.

If once again my vows displease,
There never was so lost a lover ;
In love, that languishing disease,
A sad relapse we ne'er recover.

THE RECOVERY.

SIGHING and languishing I lay,
A stranger grown to all delight,
Passing with tedious thoughts the day,
And with unquiet dreams the night.

For your dear sake, my only care
Was how my fatal love to hide ;
For ever drooping with despair,
Neglecting all the world beside :

Till, like some angel from above,
Cornelia came to my relief ;
And then I found the joys of love
Can make amends for all the grief.

Those pleasing hopes I now pursue,
Might fail if you could prove unjust ;
But promises from heaven and you,
Who is so impious to mistrust ?

Here all my doubts and troubles end,
One tender word my soul assures ;
Nor am I vain, since I depend
Not on my own desert, but yours.

PROLOGUE TO MARCUS BRUTUS.

OUR scene is Athens : And, great Athens nam'd,
What soul so dull as not to be inflam'd ?
Methinks, at mentioning that sacred place,
A reverend awe appears in every face,
For men so fam'd, of such prodigious parts,
As taught the world all sciences and arts.
Amidst all these ye shall behold a man
The most applauded since mankind began,
Outshining ev'n those Greeks who most excel,
Whose life was one fix'd course of doing well.
Oh ! who can therefore without tears attend
On such a life, and such a fatal end ?

But here our author, besides our other faults
Of ill expressions, and of vulgar thoughts,
Commits one crime that needs an act of grace,
And breaks the law of unity of place :
Yet to such noble patriots, overcome
By factious violence, and banish'd Rome,
Athens alone a fit retreat could yield ;
And where can Brutus fall, but in Philippi field ?

Some critics judge ev'n love itself too mean
A care to mix in such a lofty scene,
And with those ancient bards of Greece believe
Friendship has stronger charms to please or grieve ;
But our more amorous poet, finding love
Amidst all other cares, still shines above,
Lets not the best of Romans end their lives
Without just softness for the kindest wives.
Yet, if ye think his gentle nature such
As to have soften'd this great tale too much,
Soon will your eyes grow dry, and passion fall,
When ye reflect 'tis all but conjugal.

This to the few and knowing was address ;
And now 'tis fit I should salute the rest.

Most reverend dull judges of the pit,
By nature curs'd with the wrong side of wit !
You need not care, whate'er you see to-night,
How ill some players act, or poets write ;
Should our mistakes be never so notorious,
You'll have the joy of being more censorious :
Show your small talent then, let that suffice ye ;
But grow not vain upon it, I advise ye :
Each petty critic can objections raise ;
The greatest skill is knowing when to praise.

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